

SHALL I DEFY LAW OR BREAK UP MY HOME?

BY ROBERT MONTGOMERY

Paris, Ky., July 6.—A man without a race!

Shunned by his white relatives, pitied by his friends, white and black, Maxie Kohler, well-to-do Paris contractor, a white man, and his negro family are today facing a dilemma which threatens to wreck his life and break his wife's heart.

Kohler, who until a few days ago believed himself a negro, has discovered he is white.

His sister and other relatives from whom he has been separated since childhood and who recently discovered his whereabouts, horrified by his inter-racial marriage, changed their addresses and refuse to communicate with him.

In the face of all, driven from his adopted race by circumstances over which he had no control, his marriage made illegal by the Kentucky law, avoided by his own race, Kohler declares he will not desert his wife and babies.

Kohler's life is like a page out of fiction.

When 8 years old he and his sister were taken from a Cincinnati orphanage and adopted by Nat C. Rogers, wealthy Kentucky landowner. Their nearly childhood with the Rogers family was happy. When their foster father died they went to live with his son, Roseberry Rogers, where they were again treated as members of the family.

The boy's happiness was short-lived. After the death of Roseberry Rogers he was driven from the house, told he was a negro and must associate with other negroes on the farm. He did not know what became of his sister.

Kohler was too young to investigate his parentage, and, accepting the statement as true, went to work as a farmhand and lived with the blacks on the farm.

About 12 years ago he left the farm and came to Paris, where he became a brick mason and later entered the contracting business. He prospered, married and accumulated a modest fortune.

His home was a happy one, he was a good husband and a kind father to his children, a 5-year-old boy and 11-months'-old girl.

Then out of the sky came the knowledge he was born of white parents.

The medium was a Cincinnati newspaper carrying an advertisement asking information of his whereabouts. He answered and in a few days received a letter from a small town in Oklahoma. The writer was his sister.

In the correspondence which followed Kohler told her of his supposed negro blood and asked her for proofs that he was really a Caucasian. The answer included photographs of his father and mother and convinced Kohler that he really was white. Letters from other relatives confirmed them.

Then Kohler wrote of his negro wife and babies. The answers broke his heart. His relatives changed their addresses and refused to have anything more to do with him.

"What can I do?"

That is Kohler's problem. Kentucky laws forbid intermarriage between whites and blacks. In reality his children are fatherless.

If he leaves Paris he must give up the business he has given years to build.

If he stays he must abandon his wife and children or live outside the law.

Unwelcomed by whites and blacks alike, what can Kohler do?

He is indeed a man without a race.

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Boston Tech school has a pump that moves 22,000 gallons of water a minute.